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Letter dated 25 July 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1575 (2004), 1639 (2005), 1722 (2006), 1785 (2007), 1845 (2008), 1895 (2009), 1948 (2010), 2019 (2011), 2074 (2012) and 2123 (2013), I have the honour to convey the attached letter dated 14 July 2014, which I received from H.E. Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, transmitting the thirty-seventh report on the activities of the European Union military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see annex). The report covers the period from 1 December 2013 to 28 February 2014.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Please recycle

Annex

Letter dated 14 July 2014 from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1575 (2004), 1639 (2005), 1722 (2006), 1785 (2007), 1845 (2008), 1895 (2009), 1948 (2010), 2019 (2011), 2074 (2012) and 2123 (2013), please find enclosed the thirty-seventh three-monthly report on Operation Althea to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Catherine **Ashton**

Enclosure

Report of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the activities of the European Union military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

I. Introduction

1. The present report covers the period from 1 December 2013 to 28 February 2014.

2. In its resolutions 1575 (2004), 1639 (2005), 1722 (2006), 1785 (2007), 1845 (2008), 1895 (2009), 1948 (2010), 2019 (2011), 2074 (2012) and 2123 (2013), the Security Council requested that Member States, acting through or in cooperation with the European Union, report to the Council on the activities of the European Union military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) at least at three-monthly intervals. This is the thirty-seventh such report.

II. Political background

3. During the reporting period, ethnocentric politics and narrow party interests continued to dominate the public agenda in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The political polarization deepened and further weakened the efficiency and functionality of public institutions to the detriment of the reform agenda. Inflammatory nationalist rhetoric also continued. As Bosnia and Herzegovina entered its 2014 general elections year, political parties focused more and more on electoral calculations, thus further reducing the scope for progress on the Euro-Atlantic integration process.

4. In January 2014, the protracted political blockade in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina endangered the fiscal stability of the country. The institutions did ultimately provide a temporary solution, which allowed for the continued implementation of the standby arrangement with the International Monetary Fund and the disbursement of funds critical for the fiscal sustainability of the country. The pre-election dynamic in Republika Srpska also reverberated at the state level, where the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) was pushed out of the state level coalition.

5. In February 2014, public protests shook the political and social fabric of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The protests started in the town of Tuzla, and spread to several other cities, with calls to improve the dismal social and economic situation and to address deficiencies in the area of rule of law. At the peak of the protests there were outbursts of violence in some places. There was concern regarding possible ethnic spillover. The protests led to some hundred injured among protestors and police and to significant damages to public property, including to the building of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Four out of 10 cantonal governments in the Federation resigned under public pressure.

6. While the public protests progressively faded away, the civil society remains active, including through the work of "plenums", the new form of informal public organization, which appeared in the context of the protests. The plenums in the cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla have established their formal demands, which have been acknowledged by the cantonal authorities. However, senior leaders in Bosnia

and Herzegovina have yet to demonstrate willingness to engage with the demands of the population.

7. The European Union Foreign Affairs Council discussed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 10 February and adopted substantial conclusions in April.

8. During the reporting period, political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to fail to come to an agreement on the implementation of the Sejdić and Finci ruling of the European Court of Human Rights. On 17 February 2014, the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Stefan Füle, announced that he would no longer facilitate among the Bosnia and Herzegovina party leaders on this issue, but would redirect efforts towards improving economic governance, the rule of law and the implementation of European Union-funded projects through the Instrument for Pre-accession assistance (IPA) programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

9. No tangible progress was noted in fulfilling the condition for the activation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership action plan: a technical requirement that has been blocked by political division. The annual ammunition and explosives disposal rate remained unsatisfactory. While technical groundwork is being laid to increase disposal rate in the near future, bottlenecks still need to be overcome to increase the actual disposal rate.

10. The comprehensive approach, promoted by the reinforced European Union presence on the ground, and the increased cooperation during the February crisis between the European Union Special Representative and Operation Althea consolidated, strengthened and validated the European Union engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The European Union and European Union-related issues dominated the political and public agenda.

III. Security situation and EUFOR activities

11. The overall security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remained relatively calm except for in February 2014, when serious violence broke out in some places, which accompanied otherwise peaceful and legitimate demonstrations. Whereas these violent incidents at the end of the reporting period threatened the security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, military support was not necessary to maintain the safe and secure environment.

12. Law enforcement agencies did not respond to the protests and violence in February effectively and in a coordinated manner. Improved communication, cooperation and coordination among them would contribute to improved capacity to manage widespread public unrest.

13. Operation Althea continued its main effort in capacity-building and training, while retaining the means to support the efforts of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in maintaining the safe and secure environment.

14. EUFOR has maintained its focus on developing and maintaining the ability to integrate reserves. The Intermediate Reserve concept was validated again through a level 2 Operational Rehearsal Quick Response and the successful embedding of two Intermediate Reserve companies into the Multinational Battalion during Operational Rehearsal Quick Response 2.3, as well as a level 1 Operational Rehearsal Quick

Response by Romania in 13 December. Of significance, on 14 February the notice-to-move period of two Intermediate Reserve companies (from Austria and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) was temporarily reduced to 24 hours owing to the civil unrest in several areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This has been reverted to normal readiness.

15. In support of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), EUFOR continued to monitor and advise Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities within activities related to ammunition and weapons storage sites, the civilian and military movement of weapons and military equipment, the disposal of surplus weapons and ammunition and defence industry factories.

16. The progress of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina in taking control and managing the ammunition, weapons and explosives surplus was encouraging. However, the Strategic Board kept deferring a number of key decisions, such as increasing the operational capacity of destruction or streamlining procedures for emergency destruction that would allow substantial progress to be made. Eventually, at the fourth Strategic Board meeting, the Minister of Defence committed to establish by 31 March 2014 a task force to further develop the Bosnia and Herzegovina ammunition, weapons and explosives masterplan.

17. In support of OSCE, EUFOR continued to contribute to the enhancement of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina capacity in ammunition, weapons and explosives handling and management. The Bosnia and Herzegovina-led Strategic and Coordination Committees provided an increased level of coordination, improved decision-making process and training of staff, thus laying the foundation for increased results in disposal in the near future. The ammunition, weapons and explosives annual disposal rate in 2013 remained at unsatisfactory level by approximately 1,000 tons, a slight improvement over 2012, but similar to 2011 figures.

IV. Outlook

18. The security situation remained relatively calm except for February 2014. Concerns exist that the socioeconomic environment continues to remain a serious problem, which may have the potential to lead to situations that could threaten the safe and secure environment.

19. Particularly during the electoral campaign, a close link between EUFOR and the Bosnia and Herzegovina law enforcement agencies will be crucial to assure an adequate situational awareness.